

THE BRONCHO BUSTER

By Florence Lillian Henderson.

The Fowlers were not very good to Elsa Bruce. She realized it, but in her patient, cheerful way tried not to mind it. Mrs. Fowler was her step-aunt, Elsa was an orphan, and, aside from old Grandfather Bruce, she had no near relative in the world.

Mrs. Fowler was sour as vinegar, a chronic grumbler, parsimonious and a slave driver. Within that narrow bosom of hers she cherished the idea that she was philanthropically shel-



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tering Elsa, the poor shorn lamb, in a truly Christian way. In reality she was making a drudge of her. Elsa anywhere else would have been hailed as a jewel of industry and economy, and liberally paid for her apt, tireless ability as cook, nurse and housekeeper.

"I must keep on, if only for your sake, dear grandpa," Elsa was won't to say when the old man rebelled at the onerous duties imposed upon

her. "I don't mind the work, if they would just treat you with a little more thoughtfulness."

"It's a shame!" stormed the old man. "I gave my step-daughter the property here for providing me with a home the rest of my life, and it's just hardened her into a pitching, ungrateful miser."

"Well, grandpa," said Elsa brightly, "some day I may be lucky enough to find some one willing to marry me, and I won't go unless I can take you along with me."

"You're too good for any husband under a royal prince," declared Grandpa. "If the old days of chivalry were back again there'd be all kinds of gallant knights jousting around here to carry you off."

Elsa laughed at the ridiculous idea. She spoke some cheery words in her heartfelt way, and then went to her own room for a good crying spell.

A knight errant Elsa already had, indeed, but in a decidedly humble and unromantic way. There was not a more manly young fellow in the town than Bert Lawton, but he was poor. His ambition was to become an electrician. In Fairview activity in that line was just beginning to show itself. His pay was small, and so little could he save that, although Elsa and he were engaged, the wedding day seemed a long way ahead.

"If I hadn't been so foolish as to give my property away to that selfish step-daughter of mine," Grandpa Bruce told his venerable chum, John Davis, "I'd set that deserving young couple up in housekeeping double-quick."

Old man Davis was dependent on the bounty of a son, and none too much in love with the life itself. One afternoon Bruce met him with an excited, mysterious look on his face and a crumpled newspaper in his hand. He drew him aside to a convenient tree trunk.

"Davis," he announced jubilantly, "I've got a great scheme, and I want you to help me out with it."